

On

Tracheitis

by

William S. Cox

Paper March 17<sup>th</sup> 1829

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Stadthaus

by

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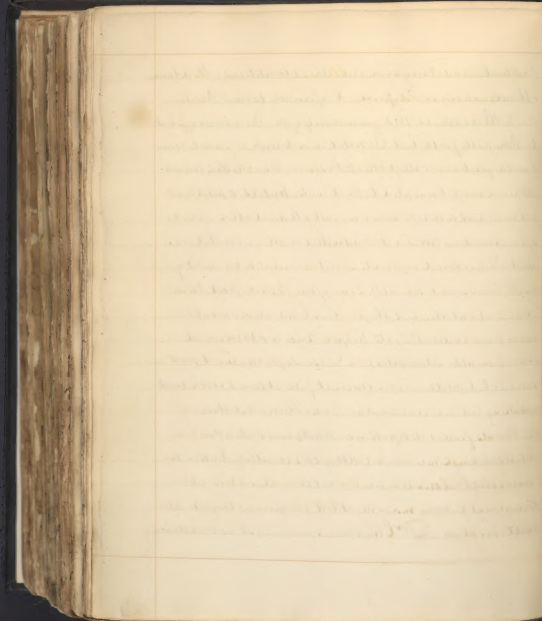
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This Disease is one of comparatively Modern Date, and is commonly said to have been first treated of by Professor Horne of Edinburgh about the middle of the last Century.

D<sup>r</sup> Chapman however mentions that he has seen a Description of it dated at a much earlier Period, and that it is also said to have been described so early as 1719, by an Italian Writer. As regards its denomination it has received a great Variety of Appellations. Those on whom the Task of giving it a Name first decided were doubtless directed rather by its External Appearance than by any well defined notions of its Character or Location. Hence the unphilosophical Terms of Suffocatio Stridula, & Colica Strangulatoria, & Colica Infantum &c much upon the same Principle as the present Popular names that it bears, as Hives (Hairs) Stiffing, Choking, & so forth. Even Wiler who has treated more largely or more scientifically of a Disease than those who have gone before him considers himself entitled to give it a new name, according to any notions he may entertain of its Pathology, than on the Discovery of its Situation, we have the Term, Larynx.

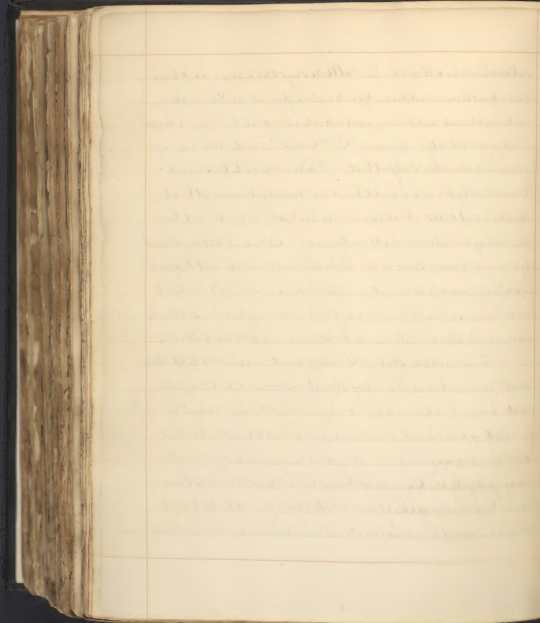
the first of the month of January 1800  
I received from you a letter of the 25th  
inst. in relation to the purchase of  
the land on which the new building  
is to be erected. I have the honor  
to acknowledge the receipt of your  
letter of the 25th inst. and in reply  
to inform you that the same has  
been forwarded to the proper  
authorities for their consideration.  
I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. M. Smith

Tracheitis and Laryngitis, and of the Adventitious Membranes,  
Membranacea, or Polyposa. Conformally to this Privilege  
Dr. Albers who in 1812 gained half of the Premium offered  
by Bonaparte for the best Dissertation on Croup, is said to have  
been the first who called this Disease, Tracheitis, which  
although not yet adopted by Systematic Writers, & perhaps  
not in as common use even amongst Medical Men, as some  
of the preceding Titles, yet is admitted on all hands to be the  
most Philosophical, as pointing out accurately the Seat of  
the Disease, and agreeing to some of the Pathological Views  
at present entertained, its peculiar Character, and at the  
same time indicating its proper Place in Nosological  
Arrangements. Tracheitis is a Disease for the most part  
incident to Children, upon whom it falls at times with most  
appalling violence, crushing the Tender Flower & destroying  
the Parents fond Anticipations. Instances of its attacking  
Adults, although rare, are not altogether wanting. Cullen re-  
marks that Children who are not yet weaned, seldom get the  
Complaint, but are more subject to it, the younger they are, after  
that time passes. Dr. Chapman says he has known no Instances



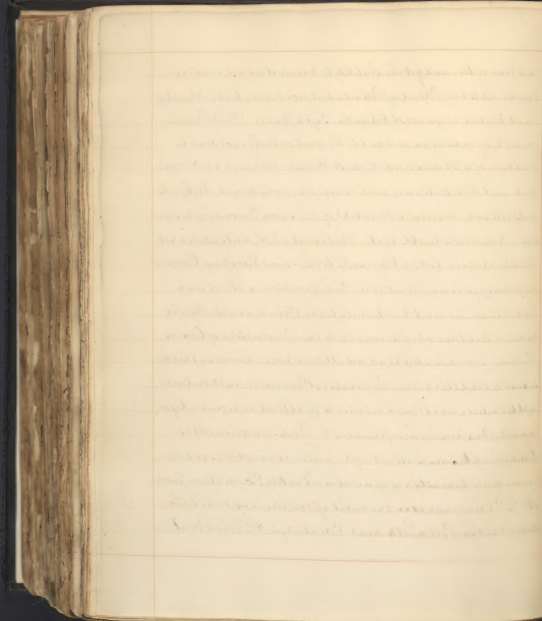
of it within the month. Dr. Willers says the same, and such  
these gentlemen adduce Gen. Washington as an Example of  
the Complaint, not being exclusively incident to Persons under  
the Age of Puberty. Some of Dr. Keen's Family, who are now  
grown up, are also subject to it. There appears to be several  
causes, why Croup should be more prevalent amongst Chil-  
dren than Adults. Children are manifestly more prone to Com-  
plaints of the mucous membranes. Croup is not infrequent-  
ly connected with such of the Exanthemata as are apt to occur  
in Infancy, and further at no other Period in Life, <sup>are</sup> the Throat  
and Lungs so much exposed by the Fashion of Dress as it exists  
throughout Great Britain, the Continent, and United States.

The incomplete State of Development, in which the Glottis  
is situated prior to the Period of Puberty, as evinced by the immu-  
mature Voice, has been adduced as another Reason, why the  
Predisposition to this Disease should be greater, but  
this does not appear to be altogether satisfactory; for if we  
may judge by the change of Voice to the deep & manly Tone  
of the Expansion of the Glottis, or its Attainment to its perfect  
Size, this must be a comparatively rapid Process accomplished

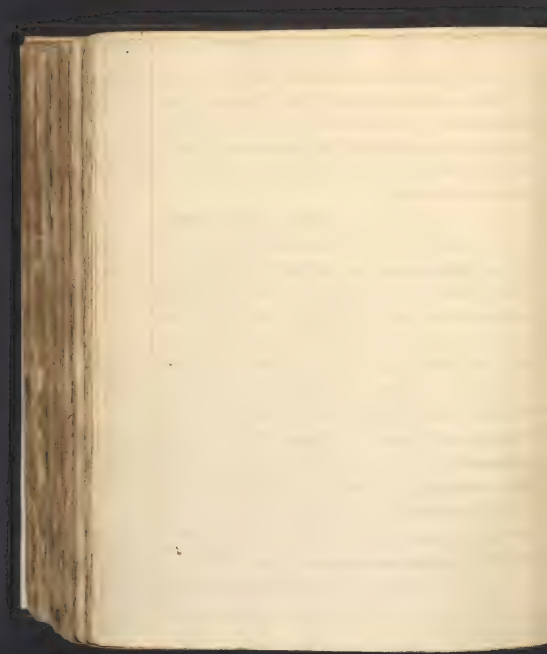




is a fever or two, and yet the Liability to Group does not continue equal until the Period of Recovery, but according to the Reports of most Writers is greatest before the Fifth Year. The Disease under Consideration is said to be particularly incident to Children of a Florid and Robust Habit although the Delicate and Sanguinary are likewise the occasional Subjects of its Attack. Several Members of the same Family are sometimes peculiarly liable to it. This in all Probability arises not from Contagion but an Exposure to the same Exciting Causes or probably from an Hereditary Predisposition. A Moist and cold Situation and Contiguity to the Ocean as also Vicissitudes of Weather are favourable to the Production of Group. Passing from a heated to a cold Atmosphere causing thereby a rush of cold Air to the Respiratory Organs is particularly apt to induce an Attack, as also a full Meal especially before going to Bed, where there prevails a Predisposition. It is Endemic to some Districts of Country, while others in the immediate vicinity enjoy an almost entire Exemption from it. Dr Chapman is in the habit of mentioning in his Lectures the Sea Port Leith near Edinburgh & Fells Point.







1. 1st. 111. At times it makes its appearance as a  
cough and with the urgent symptom of a  
Paroxysm. These are a dry, hoarse, rough, great difficulty  
of Breathing and Sense of Suffocation as if something obstructed  
the Passage of Air from the Lungs, a wild staring Look, indi-  
cating great Alarm and Apprehension, an oppressive Complaint  
great Distress and Procopious Coughs all arising  
from the Compassion of the Practitioner  
inspiring not most to be known to be a  
Disease, and insuringly old enough, a ready Acquiescence  
in any treatment proposed for this Cough. The Cough above  
alluded to must be exceedingly peculiar, it has been  
compared by the Person who has written out his Complaint  
to a Coughing as a man who has been a long time  
in a Cough, who has been a long time in a Cough  
and forcing a Piston through a Dry Pipe. Whether  
in our most terrible, it is admitted in all hands to be  
a Cough. Person who has once had it, will  
never again acquire it again. To be cured  
of this Cough is a Disease, in his own Family



has been very frequent, in enumerating its Symptoms, the  
great Emphasis on this. One who has written an Essay on  
this subject has divided his system into several Classes  
denoting the different stages of the Disease, and the degree  
of Danger attendant on each. The writer of this Essay  
has never seen a case of Group, has had access to but few  
Books, and has had but few Opportunities of conversing  
with Persons familiar with the Complaint; he does not  
therefore presume to offer an Opinion as to the Accuracy of  
this Arrangement, but his Impression derived from the Ma-  
jor sources is, that in a Disease so various and filled in  
its Attacks, in Train of Symptoms, so consecutive in Order  
and synchronous in Association, would not often be met with  
in actual Practice.

The Pathology of this Disease being  
yet a matter of Controversy, little will be said on the subject  
but it has not turned on this Point, viz. — Whether  
it be inflammatory or Spasmodic, and the  
Disputants on each side refer to Dissections as illustra-  
tions of their Opinion. The latter is for the





Inflammatory Character of Mumps, adduced in Evidence of the  
Coincidence of their being the legitimate effects of the inflammation  
in Examinations for that Purpose after Death, and particularly  
to the Adenitides of the Membrane, which has attracted so  
much Attention, and for the Removal of which, such a Surgical  
Operation has been resorted to. While on the other hand it has  
been observed in Experiments in this Disease, has not  
furnished them with a View of the Membranes Producing  
them or even of any Appearance of Inflammation whatever,  
naturally attribute the Train of Symptoms there is an Obstruction  
of the Passages, as has just been hinted. Post Mortem Examination  
has sometimes presented no Signs of Inflammation at all,  
at others various Grades of it, from a slight Redness, let but  
have, in which an Excudation of Coagulable Lymph takes  
place, which coats the Walls of the Trachea, thickening its Parts  
and thereby, shortening the Passage of Air; or upon its  
Surface, producing the Membrane. It may not  
be so, but the Coat of Mucus, lining the Respiratory Tube  
at times after Death has been of sufficient Tenacity, to  
be detached ~~or~~ without Effulution, and



has been mistaken for the Potentiated effluvia and record-  
ed as such. It is not meant by this Query to imply any dis-  
crepancy in the Existence of these Effluvia, for independently  
of one being exhibited at the University, the Author is entirely  
unable to contradict its possibility, but in its Existence  
the Frequency of its Occurrence, it would be sufficient to merit  
that it is a striking circumstance and one calculated to gratify  
the curiosity of the student with which the Editor tells us  
are sometimes tinged. The Writer does not hazard an  
Opinion on the comparative merit of these conflicting Theo-  
ries, but in the Ed. of Insipidum goes as far as recommending  
them to be distinguished, that the Complaint can be either  
suddenly or purely Spasmodic or Inflammation of the Work  
of time, & an altered Action of the vessels of a Part.

Fortunately these Discrepancies of Opinion, do  
not interfere with actual Practice, and Ed. has recommended  
the use of the Principal Remedy of Spasmodic Diseases  
which he has with which to combat Inflammation  
and with the whole Antiphlogistic Regimen, forms the Plan  
Treatment proper to be pursued in a severe attack of



Trisacridet & some other Articles, belonging to the more almost  
expell'd Leys & enters in modest in the same order & in  
of the same can be at all relied on in the Management of this  
Disease.

The Course of Treatment, now generally  
is directed by Skilful Practitioners in this. In the early Part  
of the Disease, an Emetic is administered of Spicacuanha  
or Tartar Emetic, a Purgative being given by different Physici-  
cians to one or the other Article. Tartar Emetic is I believe  
preferred however, is generally preferred, not only on account  
of the Activity and Certainty of its Operations, but as exercising  
a specific Effect not reproducible by more Emetic Purgers.

The Patient is also to be placed in the Warm Bath, this is  
generally sufficient to subside the Complaint without  
recourse to any other Measures. If it not, Recourse must be  
had to the Section, this is recommended to bleed copiously

at the time, in order to obviate the necessity of a second  
operation. The latter is, however, occasionally required  
when all the said Proceeds with the addition of Tonic  
Medicines & the Application of Leeches, cups or Issues  
is not able to the Seat of the Complaint. These with



the subsequent Administration of Mercurial Purgers, and occa-  
sionally, Emetics, &c. is necessary Remains of Tradition, &c.  
Constitute the Method of Treatment at present most ap-  
proved of. On a Review of the Remedies just mentioned, it  
will be observed, that they are equally efficacious, in resolving  
of, & in inducing Inflammation, & that they being both

in Effect, & in Manner. Besides discharging the Contents  
of the Stomach, and by forcible Expulsion of Air through  
the Windpipe, removing any Obstruction that may exist there,  
it will produce great and universal Relaxation. The Warm  
Bath besides being, by its Stimulating & softening Effects,  
useful to the Ulcers, &c. in the Region, extends its Utility  
as a spasmotic Power by its Tendency to produce an Equable  
Circulation, and relax Construction, and Blood letting,  
being directly a Palen of that in the Condition  
it is in most expeditious and effectual Means of reducing  
the vascular Actions, which is the Proximate Cause of  
the Inflammation, and when carried to Syn-  
cope, & other, the Measure best calculated to dis-  
cuss the Inflammation neglected for some hours, or possibly





and incessantly managed, is apt to extend itself to the  
Biceps causing a great accumulation of effusion, or even  
to the Lungs producing an Empyema of the Thorax.  
One of the signs in this stage of the Disease, different from  
all the former in the earlier: There is a flushed  
countenance, blush on the cheeks, or the complexion is  
mottled, the nails are of a Lead Colour, the Eyes are promi-  
nent and blood shot, the Pupils are dilated, the counte-  
nance cold and ghastly, Pulse irregular; Respiration  
laboured, or else the Patient breathing with tremble  
Ease in situations least favourable, apparently to the sym-  
ptoms, many of the signs of symptoms, indicating clearly, a dis-  
turbance of circulation and deficient supply of oxygenated  
Blood. Shall the Practitioner now adopt that course  
which would be an Excitement of the Lungs it is of importance  
to be ascertained in each of these Conditions that Patient  
that the Treatment is not the same in each Case, When  
the Difficulty of Breathing is owing to collections of effusion  
or simple obstruction of the Respiratory Passages, there is an  
Expectoration of thick Mucus or some Efforts to discharge



it with a weak Pulse and cold clammy Surface. In an  
Engorged Condition of the Lungs, however severe the Difficulty  
of Breathing, there is but little Discharge of Phlegm, and no  
Expectoration, which is generally observed in the first Case, the  
Respiration panting and laborious, and the Pulse takes a  
moderate, or possibly, either a Irregular, and the Sense  
of their Oppressed and oppressed in the first of these States  
is urgently demanded. For this Purpose, with the Aid of  
the Warm Bath to restore an Equable Circulation, Emetics  
should be resorted to, and as there is here a Deficiency of the  
aptitude to the Operation of Medicines, an Elixir brought  
like made use of. A Combination of Saccharized Antimony  
and Ipecacuanha is one of the most certain in its Operation  
to evacuate of Tense, and the Juice of Garlic or Onion also  
with Turpentine. In the Second Condition, i.e. when there  
is Congestion of the Lungs, in addition to the Means just  
mentioned, it is directed to detract some Quantities of Blood  
to obviate its Effects on the System, and therefore it  
is directed to be continued until it is seen the motion  
of the Pulse is more regular, and the Respiration of the Lungs is improved



Leeches or cups, with the bestiating applications are to be substituted. The circumstance of the Lungs appropriating to themselves so large a Proportion of the Blood of the whole Body, suggests the Propriety of Caution in drawing from the general Circulation. The Cure is to be confirmed by the use of Expectorants, as the Antimonial Wine, Syrup of Squills, or Decoct of Polygalastenega, or what contains the Active Ingredients of all three Doct. Coxs's Hiss Syrup, indeed as this is said to be a valuable Article in the early Stage of Croup, as when taken in large Doses, it unites in itself the Properties of an Emetic, Cathartic & Sudorific.

Nothing as yet has been said of the Treatment of this Disease, with Calomel exclusively, from the Opportunities of witnessing the almost invariable Emetic, as well as Cathartic Effect of Calomel, upon his own Children, the Writer would be induced to think that his most Important Article of the Materia Medica competent to the Cure of many Cases of Croup. Professor Hamilton who appears thoroughly to understand & duly to appreciate the Universality of Operation which this Medicine displays, considers himself the teacher



of the Practice and is consequently much attached to it and in his Hands it has proved eminently successful, but it probably never will acquire firm footing in this Hemisphere, where in the frightful Forms in which it makes its appearance, a malignant System of Practice prevails, and which probably will never be superseded by any other.

The Operation of Trepanotomy, which in the Case of the Removal of Foreign Bodies from the Skull places the Surgical Art on so proud an Eminence, appears to be distressfully spoken of in the Removal of the Osseous sometimes met with in this Disease. The Objections to a Recourse to it are, the Difficulty of ascertaining the Degree of its Tenacity, its Situation, or even its Existence, and the extreme Reluctance on the Part of Parents & Friends to submit to so desperate an Expedient, until the Subject of it was no longer in a Condition to benefit by its Adoption.

Not having learned largely in this Essay & for having offered nothing Original, no Apology is considered necessary, but for the numerous Inaccuracies & Defects in its Philology, one may be expected, such as one the Historian just find in a First Attempt at & an entire Unacquaintance with the Laws of Literary Composition.

Doct. Gibson